Payroll jobs fell 0.6% in the month to mid-March

Media Release

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Source: Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia, Week ending 12 March 2022

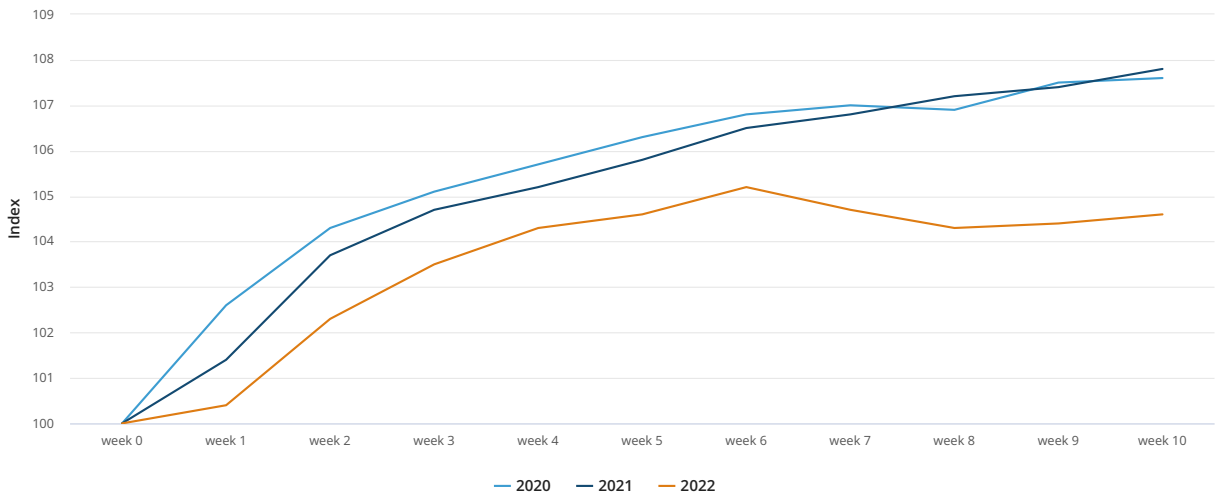
Payroll jobs fell 0.6 per cent in the month to 12 March 2022, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said: “There were differences across the fortnights, with payroll jobs falling by 0.8 per cent in the second half of February and then rising slightly, by 0.2 per cent, in the first half of March.”

These changes in payroll jobs coincided with adverse weather conditions and flooding in New South Wales and Queensland (in late February), the continuing influence of the COVID-19 Omicron variant and easing of pandemic restrictions across the country.

“Given the disruption to business operations from the weather and Omicron infections, the increase in payroll jobs in early 2022 continued to be weaker than in both 2020 and 2021, particularly over the last month,” Mr Jarvis said.

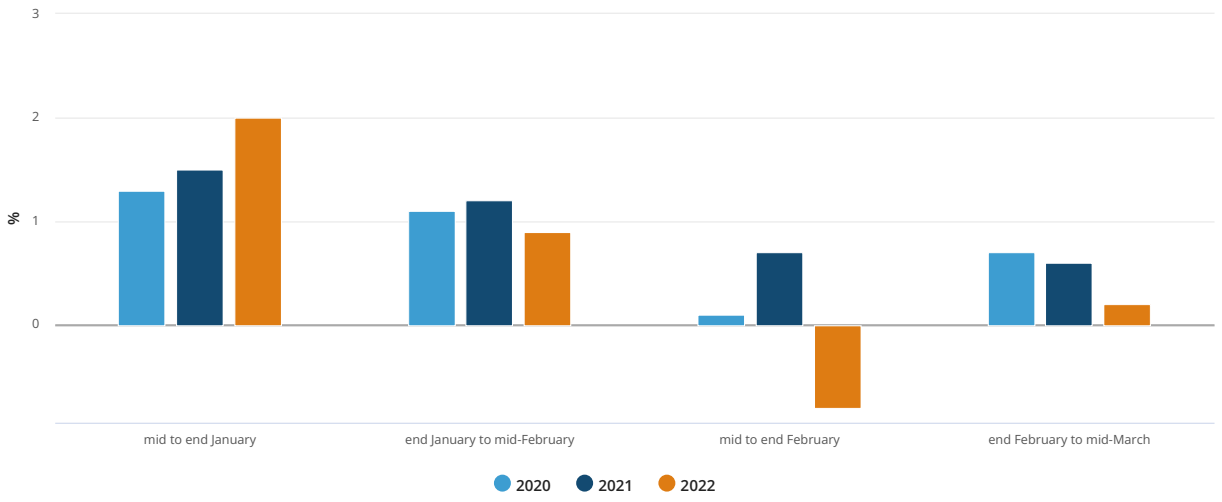
Payroll jobs index, re-indexed to first week of January for respective years (a)



a. Week 0 refers to the week ending 4 January 2020, 2 January 2021 and 1 January 2022. Week 4 reflects payroll jobs at the end of January and Week 8 the end of February.

In annual terms, payroll jobs in 2022 had been 2.0 per cent higher than 2021 in mid-January and 2.2 per cent higher in mid-February. By mid-March this had narrowed to 0.3 per cent annual growth, reflecting payroll job losses in late February, and relatively weak recovery into March.

Fortnightly change in payroll jobs, mid-January to mid-March for respective years (a)



a. Mid-January refers to the week ending 18 January 2020, 16 January 2021 and 15 January 2022.

Compared to the start of the pandemic, in mid-March 2020, there were around 4.0 per cent more payroll jobs in mid-March 2022.

Payroll jobs can show larger short-term changes than Labour Force statistics on employment, given that employees may be away from paid work for a short period without losing their job. Information on employed people working reduced or no hours in March will be available in next week's Labour Force release.

State and territory

Payroll jobs decreased in five states and territories in the month to mid-March 2022. The largest falls were in New South Wales and Tasmania (down 1.0 per cent and 0.9 per cent).

"Over three-quarters (75.4 per cent) of national payroll job losses in the month to mid-March were in New South Wales and Queensland. This was greater than their total share of payroll jobs, which is usually around half of all jobs in Australia (51.4 per cent)," Mr Jarvis

said.

Flood-affected regions of New South Wales and Queensland saw larger falls in payroll jobs than adjacent areas in late February 2022, which can be seen in regional maps in today's release.

The Northern Territory saw the largest increase in payroll jobs over the month, up 0.6 per cent.

Industry

In the month to mid-March 2022, payroll jobs fell in 14 of the 19 industries, with the largest falls in the Construction and Retail trade industries (down 2.7 per cent and 2.5 per cent). The fall in Retail trade was over three times greater than was seen during the same period in 2021 (down 0.7 per cent in 2021), while the fall in Construction contrasted with a rise of 0.7 per cent in 2021.

Across industries, Accommodation and food services continued to reflect the largest ongoing impact from Omicron-related disruption. In mid-March 2021, payroll jobs in this industry were above pre-pandemic levels in every state and territory (ranging between 1.7 per cent and 9.0 per cent). A year later, in mid-March 2022 payroll jobs were the more than 5 per cent lower than the start of the pandemic in every state and territory, apart from in the Northern Territory.

The ABS acknowledges the continued support from the Australian Taxation Office in enabling the ABS to produce weekly insights into the Australian labour market.

Media notes

- Payroll jobs are not seasonally adjusted, which generally requires at least three years of data. The longstanding seasonally adjusted Labour Force statistics series can aid in the interpretation of labour statistics across periods of greater seasonality, through the COVID-19 period.
- Payroll jobs are predominantly employee jobs paid through payrolls. Some industries, such as Agriculture, forestry and fishing and Construction, have high proportions of owner managers. For more information, see the Scope and coverage section of the Methodology (/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-12-march-2022) of this release.
- In each release, as more complete data are received, payroll jobs and wages estimates are revised. The magnitude of revisions can vary at some points of the year, such as the end of the financial year and calendar year in line with changes in the reporting

activity of businesses.

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